



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY
STRATEGIC SERVICES AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT
2019

Completed: February 2020

MANDATE

This report is prepared in compliance with Section 4 (4), Chapter 15:06 as amended by Act 4 of 2016:

“The Director shall prepare an annual report on the operations of the Agency which shall be submitted to the Minister within one month after the end of the year to which the report relates.”

Taking into cognisance section 8 (1) and (2) Chapter 15:06 as amended by Act 4 of 2016:

“(1) Subject to subsection (2), no employee of the Agency shall disclose any information obtained or accessible in the course of the performance of duties and functions under this Act unless so authorised by the Director.

(2) Disclosure referred to in subsection (1) is permissible for the following reasons only:

(a) for the investigation or prosecution of a serious crime, an offence under the Dangerous Drugs Act or any other contravention of the laws of Trinidad and Tobago;
or

(b) for the investigation of a serious crime or a dangerous drugs offence committed abroad or contravention of the laws of any other country which is party to the 1988 Vienna Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances or with whom Trinidad and Tobago has a mutual legal assistance treaty.

(3) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction on indictment to a fine of one hundred thousand dollars and to imprisonment for ten years.”

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Our military strategists for years have spoken of operating in a VUCA environment. The acronym VUCA means volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. This is the international, regional and local environment, in which we function. This past year, 2019, was a manifestation of this.

Changes in the 2019 global world order saw the United States of America (USA), China and Russia jostle for global influence. Unrest was prevalent in Latin America; in the Middle East, wars and rumours of wars. In Asia, North Korea showed its might through rocket tests. There was the continuous wrangling between India and Pakistan. In the Caribbean, the deteriorating political situation in Haiti led to the disruption in the supply of goods and services and the resulting developing humanitarian crisis from the inability to provide aid to those in need.

Featuring prominently in 2019 were climate and environment-related events such as Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas, as well as record high temperatures, rising sea levels, fires and the related impact on agriculture, health and people. These are just a few of the global issues.

Other critical local, regional and hemispheric issues facing Trinidad and Tobago and the region are crime and violence, trafficking in illicit drugs, political and economic instability, cyber in-security, trade in illicit arms and light weapons, return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their families, corruption/money laundering, terrorism, homicides, and human trafficking.

The world, the region, our Republic of Trinidad and Tobago - Volatile. Uncertain. Complex. Ambiguous.

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In 2019, we at the SSA instead, chose to be alert, unwavering in our focus and responsive – the antithesis of this VUCA environment. We were Visionary, Understanding, Clear and Agile. Our roadmap, our strategic plan was developed to create this environment, where trust, team and purpose were the keystone to our success - our prime directive – detecting and preventing serious crime in Trinidad and Tobago. This is our resolute focus – the security of the people and assets of this country.

This report focuses on the priorities of our strategic plan implementation for 2019 – our enterprise transformation, because it was fundamental to our productivity for the period. All of the decisions made, linked our work to the core and enabling priorities of Detecting and Preventing Serious Crime (core); Achieving Operational Excellence, Building Organisational Capacity, Creating Social and Economic Value (enabling).

In these times, where no agency can manage in isolation, this meant building stronger relations within and external to the Agency, with our stakeholders, alliances and partners; putting greater emphasis on the training of our most valuable resources; and improving our products and services, while enriching our culture. Externally this was evident with our representation at regional and international workshops throughout the year; providing support for our bilateral security negotiations with the EU, Ghana, India and the Republic of Korea; researching and developing speaking notes at various security fora.

Within the Agency, one of our markers was the Hurricane Dorian - Bahamian Relief Drive, which lasted only one week, and our business operations assistants willingly and capably took up the mantle of organizing it and our staff outdid themselves in their generosity. It also came to the fore with the implementation of our strategic plan, where there were immediate and positive responses.

On a more strategic note, relations with the European Union on matters of counter-terrorism hit a new high with their provision of counter terrorism expertise. The objective was to provide support and advice to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, including

the SSA, to better understand the terrorism threat and help us develop mechanisms to address challenges of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), money laundering, and financing of terrorism. This included mechanisms and tools for strengthening the rule of law. We are also expanding our international stakeholder base to specific members of the EU, like the Netherlands and Spain.

Of course, in our pursuit of excellence, perfection is only a vision. There was give and take, balancing between our investment in internal and external stakeholders; of staff development and asset/IT infrastructure upgrading; inter and intra-divisional essentials; always assessing, weighing, calculating the need of one against the efficacy of the whole. Prioritizing was necessary however, and we did it to the benefit of our primary stakeholders, the citizens of the sovereign state of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Outlook for 2020

Our forecast for the next year, given our analysis of 2019 and as the election bells ring in 2020, is of more uncertainty and complexity. It is expected that criminal gangs may continue to spread outwards from traditional areas and may either attempt to influence the electoral process by forming strategic alliances with prospective candidates or other influential persons. Corruption, evident by the wanton use of wireless devices within the prison system are just symptoms of a larger issue that criminal gangs present a real threat to the State and will continue to compromise those in authority through intimidation and misrepresentation of their true motives.

The key threats previously identified, will continue to affect Trinidad and Tobago in 2020 and may further affect the quality of life of the average citizen. Effective intelligence gathering and analysis, coupled with policy involving enforcement and adequate legal backing, as well as the improved likelihood of punishment, will augur well for the security services of Trinidad and Tobago over time.

For the Agency, we continue to live our stated values and commit fully to the safety and security of the people and assets of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, as we necessarily prioritise the country's finite resources.

The Director

Strategic Services Agency

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2019 saw the SSA evolving into an Agency of innovation, creativity and excellence. As the Director, responsible for operational, investigative and administrative control of the Agency, and with the expected teething pains, we have seen the Agency grow from strength to strength in each of these areas.

The SSA is a significant segment of the value chain of the Ministry of National Security. After its re-engineering in 2016, it became the official hub of and clearinghouse for intelligence- and information-related material - creating, modifying, melding, analysing, disseminating products and services to the stakeholders in the national security community among other areas. This persisted into 2019, as we continued to hone the skills of our employees in the three areas to fulfil our mandates of developing strategic intelligence, preparing crime prevention strategies and advising on policy formation.

The capacity of technology in intelligence is in fact helping us work more efficiently and changing how we produce. 2019, saw our IT foundations more secure, streamlined and efficient, which impacted positively on the quantity and quality of our product and allowed us to become more resourceful.

Implementation of the SSA's enterprise transformation, its strategic plan, ensures our annual work plans are in alignment with the Ministry's goals and objectives, and by extension the Government's vision for the country, as well as the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 16, which promotes peaceful and sustainable societies. The plan articulates the contribution of the Agency to the national security strategy, and in that regard, the development and wellbeing of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The plan represents the continued commitment of the Agency and its stakeholders to service excellence for the security and defense of the nation.

Our strategic initiatives of continuously improving intelligence products and services, training products and services, enhancing crime research, strengthening alliances partnerships and organisational transformation were manifested in the training, workshops and seminars to which our staff were exposed, locally, regionally and internationally. Our growing expertise also ensures we were invited to present at various conferences, at home, and at liaison and sister agencies regionally and internationally. The refinement of the services offered by our training departments has led to an increase in attendees. Our deliberate investment in creating strong partnerships has yielded increased collaboration with our external stakeholders. All this even as we continue to focus on organisational transformation, through our people, leaders and teams.

The rest of this report covers work done by the Agency:

- The Operating Environment – Context must be given to the serious crime issues facing the country. A global perspective is a requirement, leading then, into the regional and national scenes. This section provides a thorough analysis of these outlooks and makes the links to the reality facing us at home, in terms of the potential for socio-economic-political opportunity as well as turmoil, and its impact on national security.
- The Administrative Report – this deals with human resources and capacity building, and other systems implemented to ensure increased efficiency of services. It also gives a breakdown of the finances of the Agency for the period 1st January – 31st Dec 2019.
- The Operational Report –provides details on the organizational productivity and priorities.
- 2020 Strategic and Operational Priorities.

At the Strategic Services Agency, we are resolute in ensuring excellence in all the areas as stated in SSA Act 15:06 Sect (6) (1) and (2), to protect and secure our citizens and the sovereign state of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. By building organisational capacity, we aim to achieve operational distinction, as we improve our skills in the detection and prevention of serious crime in 2020.

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Scanning the Strategic Services Agency



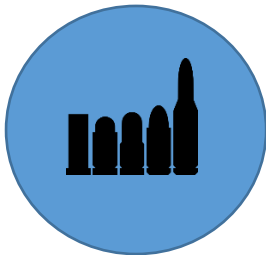
101

Evidential Actions



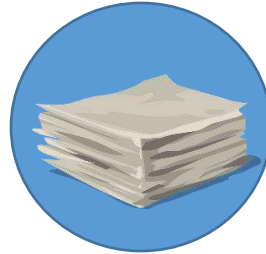
26

Persons arrested



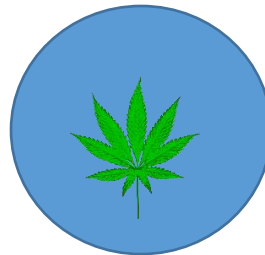
234

Ammunition seized



43

Evidential Warrants



24,500

Fully grown
marijuana trees eradicated -

Street Value:

TT\$20m+

OVERVIEW 2019

With approval sought and obtained, 2019 saw the beginning of the implementation of the Agency’s strategic plan. Our work processes were to be underscored by the following approach:



FIGURE 1 UNDERPINNINGS OF THE AGENCY’S WORK PROCESSES

2019 workplans produced by each division focused the core and enabling priorities of the Agency even though fierce competition for resources continued in the sector. The SSA continued to discharge its functions in keeping with its statutory mandate.

Throughout the year, stronger relationships were developed with our stakeholders, productivity increased in many departments, as staff were exposed to further training, workshops and experiences; the Agency became stronger and more resilient.

There were some other measurable achievements, where the Trinidad and Tobago Police service (TTPS), the Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force (TTDF) and the Agency worked together progressively to protect the country (See Figure 2 Achievements):

	<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATION SUPPORT</u>	QUANTITIES & NUMBERS
I	PERSONS ARRESTED	26
II	MARIJUANA SEIZED (LBS.)	43.1
III	MONEY SEIZED	45,991.00TT\$ 8,312US\$
IV	FIREARMS SEIZED	6
V	AMMUNITION SEIZED	113
VI	THREAT TO LIFE AVERTED	7
VII	POLICE CLOTHING RECOVERED	1

FIGURE 2 ACHIEVEMENTS

Other projects continued unabated from 2018 throughout 2019 as the SSA provided:

- i. **Expert technical assistance to our external stakeholders**, to identify and disrupt criminal activity, employing GIS technology and field exercises; mapping high crime and high-density areas within Trinidad and Tobago. The Investigations Department (INVESSA) worked directly with other operational units and services to assist in the conversion of intelligence into evidence; disrupting activities of organised crime groups. This included the rescue of kidnap victims, seizures of firearms and narcotics and the arrest of persons involved criminal activity. The SSA provided specific expert advice to the TTPrS (Prison Service) and TTPS.
- ii. **Training workshops to our external and internal stakeholders**, as we sought to design and develop suitable and apt training products and services, as well as strengthen partnerships with local and international institutions to expand offerings and opportunities for growth for those in the sector.

In compliance with the SSA Amendment Act 2016 Chap. 15:06 Section 6. (1) (d) and (k) and (2) (f):

... The Agency has the responsibility ...to maintain an inventory of all training undertaken and seek to identify opportunities for training;

... Contribute to the training of staff of the Services in crime prevention.

In that context, the following training activities were accomplished in 2019:

- i. Leadership Series Launched
- ii. Three-day Supervisory workshop launched
- iii. Professional programmes were designed, developed and ongoing
- iv. Professional Development Workshop courses were launched
- v. Launch of Foundations of Intelligence training in collaboration with IALEIA

With our internal and external stakeholders being active participants in these programmes.

Below (Fig.3) is a list of Agencies who have received training from the SSA, over the period considered.



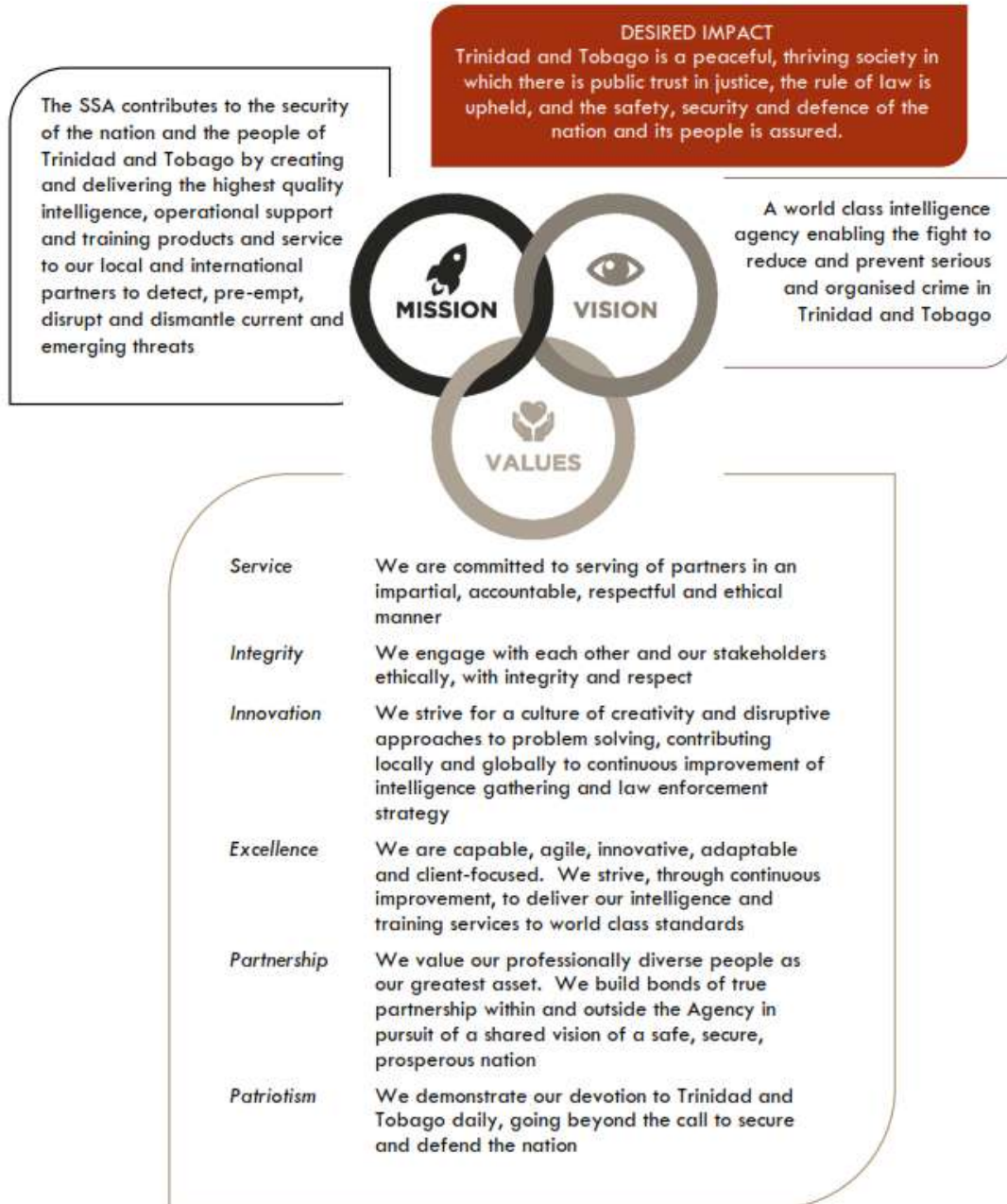
DFIU - Defense Force Intelligence Unit; MNS - Ministry of National Security; NSC - National Security Council; PATT - Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago; SSA - Strategic Services Agency; TTCG - Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard; TTFS - Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service; TTPrS - Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service; TTPS - Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

FIG 3 Training Support Provided

Altogether 425 persons trained.

STRATEGIC PLAN

FIGURE 11: OUR DESIRED IMPACT, VISION, MISSION AND VALUES TO 2023



From 2016, the Agency had begun a wide ranging organisational transformation, which included a restructuring of the organisation, regularizing of staff, and the review and re-engineering of key business processes to build capacity, capability and efficiency, emerging

from a period of crisis characterized by unclear strategy and direction, high turnover at the leadership levels, the abeyance of staff contracts, and demotivated and dissatisfied staff. The organisational transformation was also a response to the significant expansion of the role of the Agency from drug-related crime to all serious crime as articulated in the revised Act (2016).

To bring coherence, structure, measurable objectives and critical systems to the Agency, the Strategic Plan was developed and approved in early 2019. To that end, the strategy to 2023 focused on four (4) key result areas: *Detection and Prevention of Serious Crime, Achieving Operational Excellence, Building Organisational Capacity, and Creating Social and Economic Value*; through which the SSA seeks to substantially improve performance as follows:

- *By 2023, there will be a significant reduction in the incidence of serious crimes in Trinidad and Tobago (over the 2017 baseline)*
- *By 2023, the Agency will have innovative, first-in-class operating and management systems to enable consistent high-quality delivery of product and services*
- *By 2023, the Agency is an employer of first choice, with an agile, resilient workforce possessing the skills and competencies to meet current and emerging demands*
- *By 2023 the Agency will have demonstrated its contribution to the socioeconomic development of the nation*

2019, therefore, saw work continuing apace with the implementation framework of the Agency's strategic plan being charted and strengthened. 2019 saw, among other activities, the essentials being worked on for the key results areas of: Achieving Operational Excellence and Building Organisational capacity. Staff were engaged in discussions around the Agency's Business Canvass; developing behavioural indicators of our stated values. Leadership and team development workshops were held for the executive and the senior management teams, the developing work plans were linked to our strategic priorities, as well as our core and enabling priorities.

Much work has been done, but in order to achieve the goals stated below, we must remain committed to the programme, our staff, their development, the systems, and their improvement.

FIGURE 1: SSA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2023

Vision	<i>Trinidad and Tobago is a peaceful, thriving society in which there is public trust in justice, the rule of law is upheld, and the safety, security and defence of the nation and its people is assured</i>			
SSA Vision	A world class intelligence agency enabling the fight to reduce and prevent serious and organized crime in Trinidad and Tobago			
Mission	The SSA ensures the security of the nation and the people of Trinidad and Tobago by creating and delivering the highest quality intelligence, operational support and training products and services to our local and international partners to detect, pre-empt, disrupt and dismantle current and emerging threats			
Core Values	<i>Service, Integrity, Innovation, Excellence, Partnership, Patriotism</i>			
Key Result Areas	<i>Detection and Prevention of Serious Crime</i>	<i>Achieve Operational Excellence</i>	<i>Build Organizational Capacity</i>	<i>Create Social and Economic Value</i>
Strategic Objectives	By 2023, there will be 25% reduction in the incidence of serious crimes in Trinidad and Tobago (over the 2017 baseline)	By 2023, the Agency will have first-in-class operating and management systems to enable consistent high-quality delivery of product and services	By 2023, the Agency is an employer of first choice, with an agile, resilient workforce possessing the skills and competencies to meet current and emerging demands	By 2023 the Agency will have demonstrated its contribution to the socioeconomic development of the nation
Strategic Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continually improve intelligence products and services ■ Continually improve training products and services ■ Advance research on serious crime ■ Enhance information sharing networks ■ Strengthen Public Education and Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strengthen current, and attract new, Alliances and Partnerships ■ Optimise the Agency's technology infrastructure and facilities ■ Continually develop and upgrade work processes and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grow our People ■ Complete the Organizational Transformation ■ Fortify the desired culture of fraternity and performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish return on investment in delivery of national intelligence products and services

Extracted from the Strategic Services Agency Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023, pg. 31

2019 GEOPOLITICAL OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

2019 can be categorised as the year of self-serving interests. Over this period, the major competing world powers – The United States of America (USA), China and Russia continued to jostle for global influence. These displays of power coupled with divisive foreign policies, resulted in heightened geopolitical tensions.

Unrest was prevalent in Latin America owing to adjustments in government policy with regard to economic and political reform. The deteriorating political situation in Haiti led to the disruption in the supply of goods and services and the resulting developing humanitarian crisis from the inability to provide aid to those in need. Furthermore, the influence of multilateral institutions diminished over the period, as countries favoured bilateral relationships in pursuit of advanced political and economic positioning

Featuring prominently in 2019 were climate-related events such as Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas, as well as record high temperatures, rising sea levels, fires and the related impacts on agriculture, health and people.

Trinidad and Tobago is not immune from the political, social, technological and economic crises and heightened uncertainty affecting global development. As such, these trends will continue to test the absorptive capacity of institutions, communities and individuals.

This review will examine key geopolitical events of 2019 across the globe, provide an analysis of the impact on Trinidad and Tobago as well as highlight projections for 2020.



THE AMERICAS

The stimulus behind the unrest in the Americas is related mainly to political, social and economic inequalities. Protesters were mainly young and jobless persons who rejected their government policies as seen in Haiti, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Venezuela and Colombia. Meanwhile, in Mexico and Jamaica, increased violence by cartels and gangs continued to challenge authorities. The situation may persist in 2020 and possibly spread to other countries in the region.

Although the US appeared embroiled in its own domestic political affair regarding President Donald Trump's impeachment hearing, the US remained mindful of Russia and China's strategy in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Russia maintained economic interests in Venezuela through its oil company Rosneft, while China utilised economic diplomacy to secure several interests in the Western hemisphere, forcing the US to pivot on its strategy of quiet disengagement in Latin America and the Caribbean.

United States of America

In March 2019, President Trump met with leaders of The Bahamas, The Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Saint Lucia, all of whom supported the recognition of Juan Guaidó as the Interim President of Venezuela. In return, the countries in attendance were promised trade and investment assistance - a move which could be viewed as a counter-measure response to the economic advancements of China in the region. It also revealed a division in the position of CARICOM Member States.

Further, the US financial, political and economic sanctions on Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela compounded the economic woes faced by these countries. Nevertheless, the willingness of China and Russia to extend assistance to them complicated US efforts to orchestrate political change.

Venezuela and Colombia

Tension in the region increased as the governments of Venezuela and Colombia accused each other of harbouring armed rebels/terrorists. Colombian authorities estimate that as many as 1,400 fighters from National Liberation Army (ELN) operate from Venezuela and that there are 207 Venezuelan locations controlled by the ELN. These rebels/terrorists use Venezuela to plan attacks such as the January 2019 car bombing at a Bogota police academy that killed more than 20 cadets. Conversely, Venezuela's government accuses Colombia's government of allowing training camps to operate inside Colombia for groups that plot violent attacks to undermine the Maduro regime.

Furthermore, cocaine supply from Columbia increased, through the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean drug smuggling routes. An alliance between the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN) presents a grave security threat to the region including Trinidad and Tobago, given the foothold ELN has managed to establish within Venezuela. Any increase in the quantities of cocaine transiting through the country will have significant security implications for Trinidad and Tobago.

In Venezuela, the political and economic crisis continued to deteriorate with no sign of abating. Over three million people have fled Venezuela leading to an increased number of Venezuelan migrants to the Caribbean, with a significant number of them being received in Trinidad and Tobago.

Recent information revealed that the Kalashnikov (AK) weapons programme in Venezuela would be operational by the end of 2019. As such, there can be a potential influx of weapons and ammunition into Trinidad and Tobago upon completion of the AK factories which can exacerbate the problem of arms trafficking and armed violence affecting this country.



CARICOM

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was split in its response to the crisis of leadership in neighbouring Venezuela and the decision of whether to recognise the legitimacy of Juan Guaidó. Trinidad and Tobago maintained a cautious non-interventionist approach to the Venezuelan crisis.

In Haiti, violent protests continued over the year with calls for the resignation of President Jovenel Moïse over alleged corruption and economic mismanagement. Recent estimates indicated that more than 20 persons were killed in the demonstrations and attempts at dialogue between government and opposition forces were unsuccessful. CARICOM

continues to monitor the situation in Haiti as the humanitarian situation in the country worsens.



ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

In 2019, the Asia Pacific Region was characterised by continued competition, conflict and instability. China sustained its pursuit of economic and political dominance, India introduced new policies with regard to Kashmir whilst tempers flared between Japan and South Korea.

Trinidad and Tobago has major economic arrangements within the Asia-Pacific region with countries including China, Australia and India. In 2019, Trinidad and Tobago strengthened diplomatic, economic and trade ties with both India and China. The arrangements included the gifting of 200 police motorcycles and the freer movement of citizens and goods. Issues in this region, therefore, may have significant implications for the security and serious crime landscapes of Trinidad and Tobago.

China/US Relations

The escalation of the trade war between the US and China continued to set the stage for geopolitical competition in 2019. The implementation of tariffs on goods and services created further tensions in the region and between both governments. Trinidad and Tobago will inevitably begin to feel the impact of the tariffs in the business sector if the trade war is not contained.

Despite the US ban on the use of Huawei devices and technology, the Trinidad and Tobago government continued to forge ties with Huawei, so too in education, with its donation of over \$13 million in equipment for a state-of-the-art innovation lab at the University of the West Indies.

[China/Europe Relations](#)

China continued to develop strong economic ties through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with the European Union (EU). Italy signed on to be part of the BRI, becoming the largest EU country and first G7 country to join the initiative. Before Italy, 13 other EU member states had signed bilateral agreements with Beijing, officially becoming members of the BRI. China continues to grow its BRI initiative in Europe, aiming to make strategic inroads in tactical locations.

[China/Hong Kong Relations](#)

Almost six months after the protest movement began in Hong Kong, coupled with an opposition pro-democracy local electoral victory on November 24, the people of Hong Kong were unable to relinquish Beijing's control. The local election amounted to a referendum of the Beijing-backed leadership, however, the election results sent a clear message of the strength of societal approval for it to pursue pro-democracy measures. Ultimately, this means the central government will have to address opposition demands in some fashion or risk drawing an even stronger reaction on the streets as well as more international scrutiny. Critically, this year's election outcome will not appease the city's radical protesters, whose confrontations with authorities have persisted, irrespective of the city's political process. Whatever concessions Beijing grants may either appease protesters and embolden the push for a pro-democracy movement or inflame demonstrators and deepen the political crisis.

[China/Taiwan Relations](#)

China proposed that Taiwan be governed under a "one country, two systems" structure similar to Hong Kong. President Tsai of Taiwan, however, opposed this suggestion stating that the civil unrest in Hong Kong indicated this model to be a failure. China has taken steps to provoke Taiwan's self-sufficiency by making it difficult to do business in Taiwan.

[China/Philippines Relations](#)

Tensions in the South China Sea have heightened in 2019, between the Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Beijing claimed that the disputed South China Sea was not up for negotiation and disregarded Duterte's opposing position on the issue. Fearing any further tensions, the UK, France and Germany - parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) - expressed concern about the situation in the area as the possibility of war in the South China Sea is now of international concern.

Furthermore, recent developments surrounding China blocking access to oil and gas in the South China Sea is also receiving attention. The US, Japan, Australia and the UK have sent military assets on various occasions to counter China's expanding control in the South China Sea.

[Detention of Uihgurs in China](#)

China was accused of religious persecution and the repression of minority culture for purportedly detaining approximately one (1) million Uihgurs Muslims in camps in Xinjiang. The Chinese authorities have made claims of terrorism and extremism against the Uighur. The repression of the Uihgurs is of interest to Trinidad and Tobago given the rising immigrant Chinese population in this country and the potential for an expansion of militant Islamic sentiment.

[Japan/South Korea Tensions](#)

In August 2019, tensions rose between Japan and South Korea over the declaration by South Korea to terminate the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) - military intelligence-sharing agreements which allow both countries to share information about North Korea's military and nuclear activities. Nevertheless, in November 2019, South Korea agreed conditionally, to continue the agreement. Tensions further increased with North Korea's recent range of missile tests, regarded as threat to Japan and the international community.

India/Kashmir Tensions

The Pulwama bombings in Kashmir on February 14th, 2019 heightened tensions and instability between India and Pakistan. In August 2019, India revoked the special status of the disputed region of Kashmir and sent thousands of troops to suppress any potential unrest. India also cut all communications to the people of Kashmir and imposed a curfew. India proposed that Kashmir be ruled directly from Delhi as a Union Territory. Pakistan claimed India violated the United Nations Security Council resolution of Jammu and Kashmir's special status. In September, over 50 UN countries and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) called on India to end its human rights violations in the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.

India/Russia Relations

Matters discussed at the Putin-Modi Bilateral Summit held in September 2019 included the establishment of joint ventures in the areas of for the design and construction of passenger aircrafts, defence technologies and increased military cooperation. The strategic partnership also included a possible long-term agreement to import Russian crude, possibly using the Northern Sea Route and a pipeline system. The shipping route will partly traverse the South China Sea, a scene of numerous territorial disputes involving China and neighbouring countries over the years. This India-Russia partnership has the potential to threaten China's sphere of influence in the region.

Major Trade Agreements

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a trade and investment agreement that consists of all the 10 ASEAN countries, along with China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Negotiations continued in 2019 and signing is anticipated in 2020. This Agreement would encompass approximately half of the world's population and one-third of global GDP. The successful conclusion of RCEP would be a significant statement of support for the multilateral trading system and represent a major pushback against US protectionism.

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is a free trade agreement between Canada, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam, thereby making it one of the world's largest free trade agreements. Countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka declined to join both the RCEP and CPTPP, this in turn can limit their future economic growth.

In August 2019, an improvement in the framework of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) led to further agreements on trade in services which has the potential to strengthen trade relations. The development of China's strategic partnerships in *Southeast Asia and the wider region is an ongoing process and displays encouraging signs of the Asia-Pacific countries to engage economically in trade. This provides opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago to broaden its landscape of trade partnerships with countries in the Asia-Pacific region.*



EUROPE

The major concerns in this region are geostrategic tensions, political change and far-right movement, terrorism and Brexit.

Terrorism

Europe's main concern is the future of terror attacks with the repatriation of returnees from Syria and Iraq. Returnees have been repatriated to countries such as France (18 children), Germany (less than 10), Sweden (7 children) and Norway (5 children).¹ The London Bridge attack in November 2019 occurred mere days after the UK lowered the terrorism threat level from severe to substantial, which brings into question the chilling reality of the probability that convicted terrorists will re-offend in the future. This situation draws European countries' attention to the threat of returning terrorist fighters and the effectiveness of their de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes for returning

¹ Reality Check by BBC News (2019). Islamic State: Who is taking back foreigners who joined? <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-49959338> Accessed on November 12, 2019.

nationals. *Trinidad and Tobago has been learning from the Europeans' experiences and their varied responses.*

Political Change and the Far-Right Movement

There is a growing far-right movement throughout the European Union, which is being purported as nationalism and love for the European way of life. Within the last few years, there has been a surge in the popularity of far-right parties across Europe. This commenced with the National Front and Marine Le Pen, in the 2017 French elections, the GEERT Wilders' Party of Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands 2017 and the League, in Italy, in the 2018 federal elections. EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, created a Portfolio for a Vice President in charge of "Promoting our European Way of Life", akin to far-right xenophobia and right-wing nationalistic rhetoric, which exist in the portfolio of the Commissioner responsible for issues such as migration, border control, employment and education.

As the popularity of far-right parties increase across the EU, some believe leaders would attempt to co-opt some demands instead of opposing them completely². However, doing so may perpetuate the idea that everything that is inherently non-European is inferior. Far-right rhetoric is gaining momentum within governments and therein lies the challenge that these groups would hold the power to make and adjust agendas that affect nations, regions and eventually the world. The movement of the far-right into positions of power is not limited to Europe but is growing worldwide via leaders such as Donald Trump in the United States, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Narendra Modi in India, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel and Jaroslaw Kaczynski in Poland amongst others.

Brexit

The trajectory of the Brexit saga will depend on the outcome of the elections set for December 12, 2019, with a deadline of January 31, 2020. A conservative win would allow

² Daniel Trilling (2019). The Guardian. 'Protecting the European way of life' from migrants is a gift to the far right. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/sep/13/protecting-europe-migrants-far-right-eu-nationalism> Accessed on December 04, 2019.

the United Kingdom Withdrawal Agreement Bill to pass in Parliament and to begin a transition period of negotiations that end in a long-term trade deal between the UK and the EU by December 2020. If labour wins, its manifesto states that they will renegotiate a withdrawal deal with a closer relationship with the EU and the customs union within three months of taking power, and hold a referendum three months later, with a choice between this new deal and cancelling Brexit altogether.



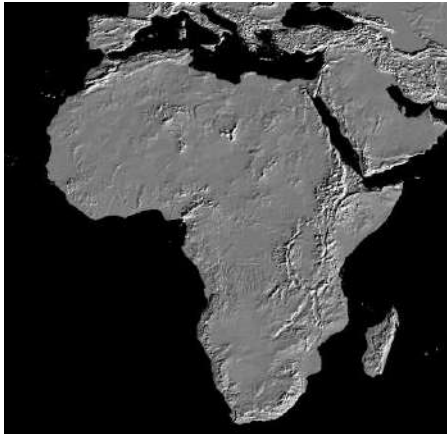
RUSSIA

In recent years, Russia's ambition for recognition as a great power and a significant global actor is articulated in its foreign policy initiatives, geographic expansion, relationships and project influence in Africa, Latin America, the Middle

East and other parts of the world. Today, Russia's relations with the West are a mixture of hostility and tolerance. For Russia, European countries are nothing more than US satellite states and consider the problems in the European Union (EU)-Russia relations merely an outgrowth of Russia's troubled relations with the US.

Russia will not accept US global leadership and in return, the US and Europe refuse to recognise Russia's independent foreign policy and domestic political order. However, its relations with China have increased, mostly to Beijing's benefit. Russia is geopolitically isolated but is able to think and act globally, even though it is constantly reacting to the actions of opponents and focusing on tactical moves.

The Russia, India and China (RIC) partnership is an avenue to strengthen Russia's economic and security interests, while allowing Russia to act as a leader in stabilising the region, preventing and resolving armed conflicts. Russia is part of the peace negotiations to find a solution to the war in Afghanistan, it plays a key role in neutralising the threat of foreign incursions in Syria and is involved in mediating between Israel and the Palestine Authority including Hamas as well.



AFRICA

Uprisings in Algeria and Sudan, political unrest in Libya and Egypt, protests in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and the Palestinian territories all point to the return to the mantra of the Arab spring in the region. Political agents sought to disrupt internet access and media coverage of events, in order to minimize the number of protesters and repress such actions from gaining momentum and global traction.

Libya

Of particular interest is the situation in Libya. Clashes between rival militias in Tripoli and the country's ongoing political impasse between Marshal Khalifa Haftar, the commander of the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army and the national unity government of Fayez Saraj, underscored its fragile security situation. The country's descent into chaos and lack of governance make it a valuable migrant route into Europe and/or a potential area to attract Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs). The circumstances in Libya indicate a difficult transition ahead to a functioning democracy given that the state of civil war and political unrest may continue to escalate in the times ahead.

Sudan

In 2019, protests in Sudan against imposed austerity measures resulted in a military coup forcing former President Omar al-Bashir to demit office. Defiance against a ruling military state led to a shared transitional government comprised of civilian and military personnel. The arrangement attracted international support but remains volatile to competing states' interest in Sudan. The influence of France and other neighbouring states, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Iran and China could affect Sudan's future political and economic restructuring efforts. However, without meaningful political and financial support from the international community, Sudan's debt burden will continue to rise, exacerbating the country's economic instability and potential vulnerability to another political upheaval.

Algeria

The February 2019 Algerian Revolution involved nationwide protests against President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, which forced his resignation and demanded political legitimacy, transparency and regime change. Protesters demanded an end to the power of the military and the establishment of credible institutions.

Egypt

In Egypt, hundreds of demonstrators, in September, engaged in a widespread anti-government protest, to signal an apparent dissatisfaction with President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's rule. However, since 2013, Egypt has restricted gatherings of more than 10 people unless they are in possession of a government permit and have allowed the state security forces to maintain control, using excessive force to disperse the crowds and arrest dissidents. As such, continued suppression could activate a new wave of profound anti-government unrest and anger that could snowball future demonstrations and violent outbreaks, unless the government offers economic concessions to ease demonstrators' anger.



MIDDLE EAST

As tensions continue to unfold between Iran and the US, stability in region remained uneasy with the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) enforced Qatar blockade, the Yemen crisis, the post-Islamic State (IS) challenges in Iraq and Syria, and Turkey's varying foreign policy dilemmas with the US, Russia, Iran and Syria. In addition, traditional US allies purchased or considered the purchase of Russia's military equipment, fearless of the US-imposed sanctions under its Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which targets the purchases of military equipment from Russia. Countries expressing interest include Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar. Inclusive is Saudi Arabia's determination to attain regional hegemony and defuse problems with the US in the aftermath of the Khashoggi saga. However, the US intention of strengthening

Sunni Arab unity stalled, with the GCC dispute and Iran's bid for ascendancy and influence in the region.

The attacks on tankers in the Gulf of Oman, the downing of a US drone, and the barrage of rockets and drones from the Iran-supported Houthi controlled areas in Yemen on the energy infrastructure and airports put Saudi Arabia and the UAE as targets on the frontline. Without US military support, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, will be at the mercy of Iran and its proxies, as the Arab militaries in the Gulf cannot stand up to Iranian aggression. Countries such as Egypt and Israel are maintaining indirect involvement in the conflict for now.

Arab leaders again have to rely on Western support in the face of the political and military instability in the region. In the midst of heightening tensions, the US Senate has decided to increase US pressure on Saudi Arabia, by placing the country on a blacklist for not doing enough in the fight against human trafficking. The US Senate has voted to block further military deals with the Kingdom even though Saudi Arabia currently leads the US-sponsored anti-Iran block. While the legal repercussions are small, at a time of regional conflict and a possible US - Iran military action, the US needs the full support of its Gulf-based allies.

Although Saudi Arabia is viewed as the de facto leader in the Middle East, it has not been able to direct the alliance of nations in the Arab league and this body remains weak and disunited. Allies like the UAE are arguably more dependable but their reliability tends to exist within the narrow parameters of countering Iran, preserving their monarchies and keeping oil revenue high. In other words, Saudi Arabia may be a regional leader, but its strength hinges on the strength of the coalition of allies it leads.

Iran

Conflict between the US-Iran impacted the stability of the Middle East region. Allies of the US wishing to maintain friendly relations with Iran were in a particularly complicated situation. Turkey stated that it is ready to create a special trade mechanism to circumvent the US sanctions, while the UAE, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom (UK) called for more dialogue and for de-escalation of the conflict with Iran. Meanwhile, Iran continues to accuse European countries of not working to salvage the 2015 nuclear deal.

Though US-Iran tensions remain high over Iran's nuclear capability, the US is aiming to halt Iran's advancement across the Middle East. This includes limiting the number of Iranian ground forces in Syria to prevent them from having a connecting overland route to the Mediterranean Sea and to curb any foreseeable threat to Israel.

Israel

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has a formal charge of bribery, fraud and breach of trust, and has a legal obligation to resign from his position. In addition, he was unable to form a coalition government after recent election results, which revealed no clear winner. Prior to the formal charges laid, Netanyahu was criticised for attempting to boost electorate support from his legal and political troubles by initiating and exacerbating decades of violent conflict with the Palestinians and supporting allies in stoking Iran's economic sanctions and violent protests. Under international law, Israel as an occupier is obliged to foster economic development for the Palestinians, whose territory it occupies. Recently, the US reversed its policy position on Israeli occupied settlements. In addition, the Palestinian Authority has refused the US economic plan for the Palestinian economy and other border countries, citing the main problem remains that of Israeli military occupation. They have also refused the US dollar diplomacy initiative, which essentially aimed to convince Palestinians to accept economic incentives in exchange for their rights to exist as a people and as a country, separate from Israel.

Syria

Syria remains a melting pot for foreign incursion regardless of President Bashar Al-Assad's ability to retain power. While foreign intervention from the US, Russia, Turkey, Israel and other proxy groups helped to contain IS influence in Syria, military strikes and ground attacks aimed at Iranian and Hezbollah forces, allies of the President Assad's regime, could further threaten Syria's peace process and spark further conflict among competing interests in Syria. In October 2019, Turkey's military operation 'Peace Spring' in northeast Syria concluded and drove the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) back from its border to establish a "safe zone" stretching at least 30km (19 miles) into Syria to resettle some of the 3.6 million refugees it currently hosts. The success of Turkey's operation occurred via deals made with the US and Russia to control the Turkish offensive against further human rights violations in Syria.

Turkey

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AKP party was defeated in Istanbul's mayoral race. Turkey is a major US-ally and broker of Middle East conflicts in the region. Hence, Erdogan's foreign policy decisions with the US, Russia and Iran could face internal opposition. Already US-Turkey relations are waning on issues such as its energy interests in the Mediterranean Sea, the anti-Kurdish militant operations in Iraq and Syria, its procurement of Russian S-400 air defence system and its economic ties with Iran and more recently with Qatar. With both the US and opposition forces in Turkey opposition criticising Erdogan's foreign policies, there can be a shift to nationalist policies, in an attempt to stave off electoral challenges in 2023. This can however worsen Turkey's economic instability.

IMPACT ON TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The world has moved into an unsettling number of interconnected geopolitical threats, which has created new risks and uncertainties, rising military tensions, economic and commercial disruptions, and destabilising political decisions that allow aspiring powers to seek to adjust the rules of the game to benefit their interests. Although Trinidad and Tobago's economy is on the rebound, the economy is susceptible to external shocks from fluctuating energy prices, volatile trading agreements, cyber-attacks, migration and environmental hazards. The country is also vulnerable to internal threats from scarce resources, crime, corruption, terrorism and the increasing threat of civil disobedience, as can be predicted, by the spike in global protests.

The US sanctions policy, emerging markets crises, protectionism, digital disruption, climate change, political violence, and other forces of disruption have introduced unprecedented levels of volatility for businesses to navigate. Some of the worst business disruptions in 2020 will come not from trade wars or terrorist attacks, but from the consequences created by geopolitical events as they intersect with one another.

To a large degree, the geopolitical risks inherent in the trends come from the inability of governments to effectively anticipate and manage the coming changes in ways that preserve

or create security and prosperity for their citizens. Geopolitical trends like political tensions, terrorism, populism and dissent, climate change, digital disruption, and migration are some of the threat multipliers in 2020, including country-based threats. There is still a great deal of uncertainty around the fall-out from Brexit, the US disconcerting domestic politics, and President Trump's predisposition to rapid and unexpected shifts in US foreign policy. As China grows bolder on its quest to solidify its position as a global power, Russia continues to expand its influence in the Middle East, while the tension increases between Saudi Arabia and Iran as they fight for supremacy in the Gulf. The number of stalled revolutions around the world on issues of politics and economics and women's rights is on the rise. All of this, taken together, is escalating a massive shift in the global order.

The challenge in risk forecasting the key geopolitical threat the world is facing in 2020, is the unpredictability of both black swan events³ and human behaviour. For this reason, governments and businesses alike must be ready for a wide range of possible scenarios that could disrupt operations. Preparedness and comprehensive, systemic risk analysis will be imperative to minimising losses and maximising opportunities in 2020.

³ Brooks, Chuck et al, 2019. Risk Management and Black Swan Events. A black swan is an unpredictable event, which has potentially severe consequences. Black swan events are rare events created by geopolitical, economic, or from other unexpected events. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cognitiveworld/2019/10/23/risk-management-and-black-swan-events/#69de0faf3f61>

THE LOCAL MILIEU

Introduction

Serious Crime, Narcotic Trafficking, Economic and Food Security, Illegal Migration, Returnee Foreign Terrorist Fighters (RFTFs), Domestic Islamic State and the Levant (ISIL) inspired radicalised enthusiasts and Public Corruption continue to dominate the security landscape and demand resources. In 2019, while the State has managed some of these threats, many effects may yet manifest in 2020. Prioritising these threats remains near impossible and as such, the national security apparatus finds itself in a precarious position specific to the reduction of serious crimes and its mal-effects. This remains pertinent within this volatile environment as 2020 is essentially an election year.

Local Government Elections occurred in December 2019 while National General Elections and Tobago House of Assembly Elections are scheduled to occur in 2020. The decline in oil and gas production, the presentation of a National Budget scheduled for September 2020 and the streamlining of some statutory institutions and public entities have made the environment even more unpredictable. Furthermore, the private sector is also affected by the wider economic activity occurring in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago continues to manage the decline in revenue from Oil and Gas sales within the present context of increasing public demand. The prerequisite decrease in subsidies due largely to this decrease in revenue, has affected the majority of the population. These reductions have primarily resulted in a rise in transportation costs and education. Consequently, in attempting to reduce public wastage and ensure value for money, the State has attempted to prioritise its capital investments and further reduce public expenditure. While these have resulted in some largely unpopular but necessary decisions, the ensuing fallout partially shapes the serious crime landscape.

Other external factors inclusive of the decimation of the Islamic State and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria and Iraq by coalition forces, and the prolonged socio-political impasse in

neighbouring Venezuela (both mentioned above) continue to plague Trinidad and Tobago. These two occurrences though dissimilar have the propensity to shape the international discourse on the geo-strategic importance of Trinidad and Tobago as a sovereign nation, presenting a threat and strain on existing State resources.

Internally, the monopolisation of State contracts by business interests has diminished at each level of the economic strata and the dispersed distribution of resources temporarily reduced hostilities between competing non-state actors in specific geographical spaces. While these and other occurrences are viewed positively, there are several concerns that remained important throughout 2019.

Security Operating Environment

As the primary law enforcement agency, the TTPS has relied on increased visibility, community outreach and an improved effort specific to organised and gang-related crimes and narcotic trafficking. The TTPS under the stewardship of Commissioner Gary Griffith has attempted to diversify its operations by acknowledging the threats associated with the fourth border (Cyber).

Much required legislative amendments also characterised the security environment. While some of these amendments and bills remain in process, there is the possibility that they would bolster the efforts of the multiple security agencies and law enforcement initiatives. Cumulatively, these legislative amendments focus on decriminalising non-heinous crimes and attack precursors to serious crime. The precursors identified include the manufacture, distribution of amphetamine type substances and their derivatives, and the possession of illegal weapons. At the meso-level of analysis, there are independent pieces of legislation aimed at organised crime inclusive of protection of state witnesses and aspects of money laundering such as illegal gambling.

Specifically, the following laws are considered specific to the reduction, detection and punishment of serious crimes in the year 2019 as follows:

1. The Bail Amendment No.2 Bill,
2. The Cannabis Control Bill 2019,
3. The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill 2019,
4. The Evidence (Amendment) Bill 2019,
5. The Gambling (Gaming & Betting) Control Bill 2019 and,
6. The Whistleblower Protection Bill 2019.

Specific to the protection of maritime coastal borders the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) procured vessels from the Australian Government to augment existing security measures. These borders continue to be a source for several ills that continue to affect society. The already existent drug trade has morphed to a burgeoning trade on the Gulf of Paria that is also affected by the prolonged Venezuelan reality.

The proliferation of illegal firearms continues to negatively affect society despite the increasing seizure rate for arms and ammunition. Intelligence reveals that there is an influx of more sophisticated weapons and component parts available on the black market. These component parts allow for the alteration of normal handguns to automatic weapons and increased carrying capacity for ammunition. Many of these weapons flow from North America, which raises the issue that official maritime and air ports within Trinidad and Tobago are compromised. This reality also compounds the transfer of illegal weapons from Latin America through Venezuela.

Criminal Gangs

2019 the annual number of murders reached of 538. The majority of murders were gang motivated and males, the most popular victims. The proliferation of illegal weapons and ammunition remained a cause for concern as the majority of murders continue to be perpetrated via the means of illegal firearms. In 2019, however the statistic for murdered

women has also risen affecting the murder rate. Multiple murder events have also become prevalent as gang members exact revenge on each other throughout the country.

The violence, endemic in Trinidad and Tobago, is not concentrated in any one specific community, police station district or division. Of the nine police divisions – the Northern, Port of Spain, Central, Western and Southern Divisions remained some of the most deadly areas for 2019. Gang members plague several communities within these divisions thus affecting the crime rate. Arms and ammunition continued to enter the country and replace those already seized by the Police Service.

As gangs remain separated along ideological lines, the level of violence will increase as the mean age for members decrease. This younger group have proven themselves to be more violent and brazen thus are more influential. The infusion of gang culture with dancehall music is also an issue for specific age groups. Music has allowed a medium for gang members to display wealth and other ill-gotten gains via social media allowing for the glorification of the illegal lifestyle. This is also an effective recruitment strategy allowing gangs to ensure continuity.

Natural Environment

The natural environment in Trinidad and Tobago was relatively stable in 2019. There was no repeat of devastating flooding patterns or earthquakes. While flooding has become an expected occurrence in Trinidad and Tobago it is anticipated that the Agency via its fusion centre will respond and assist where necessary.

The Piparo Mud Volcano, another natural phenomena affecting the security environment, reactivated in September 2019. The volcano last erupted on February 22nd, 1992, forcing 300 persons to abandon their residential homes and livestock. In the wake of the eruption, 31 families were permanently displaced.

Terror & Radical Threat Environment

In 2018, reports of the decimation of ISIL by coalition forces dominated international media. This continued through 2019. Undoubtedly, with the highest export of foreign terrorist fighters in the western hemisphere per capita, the GORTT continues to prepare for this fallout. The ISIL phenomena has forced the security agencies of Trinidad and Tobago to accept two realities – the first being that within the 10% of Muslim believers, there is a degree of domestic radicalism which demands attention and secondly, that the state apparatus should prepare for a possible mass return of FTFs and their offspring to Trinidad and Tobago over time. Global trends indicate that some of the returnees would either find solace within Criminal Gangs or return to similar paths of radicalisation. In either event, this group presents a significant threat that requires resources and a corresponding Whole-of-Government approach.

Trafficking/Smuggling (Narcotics, Arms & Ammunition & Humans)

Marijuana, Cocaine and Amphetamine type stimulants continue to be circulated and consumed in Trinidad and Tobago. Changes in the narcotic market undoubtedly occurred in 2019.

The pervading presence of migrants both undocumented & permitted as per the Venezuelan reality continues to influence the retail and export narcotic trade. This reality continues to drive the criminality associated with the trade. While locals continue to dominate the trade, there are indications of a thrust by some Venezuelans and Columbians to establish and control wholesale narcotic operations in some parts of Trinidad and Tobago. As a result, there were reports of murders of Venezuelan Nationals in different areas of Trinidad and Tobago for 2019. Further, several Trinidadian and Tobagonian drug traffickers and fishermen have either been kidnapped for ransom or robbed on the high seas.

The local demand for marijuana remains high and as such, this country provides a thriving retail market for Venezuelan and Vincentian varieties, among other types. The allowances for domestic cultivation and possession of marijuana as related to the local decriminalisation of marijuana will undoubtedly change the nature of the drug trade and retail markets. Trafficking which remains a serious crime is expected to continue and possibly intensify.

Cocaine trafficking continued over the year 2019. The Caribbean Basin has always remained a trans-shipment route and is expected to remain one due to its geographical location. Trinidad and Tobago as one of the southernmost Caribbean islands and one of the closest to Venezuela continues to feel the negative effects of increased Mexico/United States border management among other issues. Cocaine trafficking, Money Laundering and the diversion of US Currency to facilitate the drug trade continues to occur. As the situation in Venezuela continues, it is expected that cocaine trafficking will increase.

In 2019, the use of Amphetamine type stimulants including Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), Ecstasy and other unknown narcotics became more apparent in the local environment. These drugs are sold in pill form at several public events. Several social media videos are being circulated demonstrating the target group as well as the devastating effects of these pills. Intelligence suggests that six of the fifty most potent pills worldwide are currently available on the local market.

The narcotic environment is also compounded by the human smuggling and trafficking trade. As the Venezuelan crisis persists, several immigrants are initially smuggled to Trinidad and Tobago and then forced into labour. Passports and other official documents are confiscated and persons become victims of Human Trafficking. Female minors are forced into the illegal sex trade and forcibly become involved in the consumption of drugs. Some criminal organisations utilise Ketamine to ensure sexual compliance for unwilling victims. Intelligence suggests that some element of the Asian Population within Trinidad and Tobago is actively involved in this practice and collude with locals and possibly Venezuelan nationals.

ROLE OF THE SSA

The SSA continues to provide support at all levels of analysis to various stakeholders. As per its intelligence gathering capabilities, the assets of the Agency continue to collect information and produce intelligence specific to kidnapping, terrorism, acts of subterfuge, corruption, narco-trafficking and other serious crimes. Operationally, the Agency has supported primary stakeholders via its Investigations Department and other field assets.

In 2019, Trinidad and Tobago recorded an increase in the number of prison escapees. As such, the SSA has continued to be actively involved in the recapture of these escapees; detection of murders committed by gang members on the orders of leaders and has affected significantly, the operations of migrant smugglers and drug traffickers. In support of the Criminal Justice System, the Agency's assets continue to assist in the preparation of evidential packages against key persons of interest and work alongside other Law Enforcement agencies.

Strategic level analysis has also become a feature of the Agency as several high level alerts continue to be generated. For 2019, the alerts focused on imminent threats that affect the national landscape. These issues included murder projections for 2019, illegal quarrying, squatting, decriminalisation of marijuana, corruption and inadequacies in the prison service, property crimes against susceptible populations including the elderly, gang recruitment in secondary schools, resisting arrest and other acts of hostility.

Additionally, the Agency has produced several Threat Assessments specific to events of national concern, all public holidays and other significant periods. These assessments consider threats and the likelihood of crime against the national population, key infrastructure and other sites of interests. Collectively, the assessments for 2019 have ranged from **LOW–MEDIUM** however; Carnival has proven to as one of the most

vulnerable times for the population. As such, due to the popularity of the event and the global attention it receives, security arrangements for the season should be enhanced and law enforcement should heighten vigilance.

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Corporate Services Report

CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate services is regarded as the Agency's backbone. It provides the unseen but essential structures to support the Agency's myriad security activities – from the overarching human resources management to the delivery of training, robust financial procedures and facilities management. This all is supported by an IT infrastructure, which saw new core and controlled upgrades in 2019. In leveraging the capacity of technology in intelligence, serious work has been done by the library and information centre. As open source analytics become more important, 2019 saw greater involvement in the identification, selection and collection of resources in the public domain and their subsequent processing in accordance with international guidelines and standards. Without these functions, the Agency's intelligence and operational activities – the fundamental work of the Agency - will not be effectively accomplished. In ensuring we have the trust of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, 2019 found the SSA fine-tuning its services, especially developing stringent procurement and accounting systems; improving and strengthening IT substructures.

Human Resources

This department is key to strategic enterprise transformation. This unit straddles three of the four key results areas – KRA (ii) achieving operational excellence, KRA (iii) building organisational capacity and KRA (iv) building social and economic value. In other words, the success of the reformation of the Agency is dependent on a robust, creative, focused human resources function. A key objective is to make the Agency an employer of choice, this we do by sound human resource planning and development - recruiting the best and creating a positive work environment and culture, which will encourage them to stay and perform, individually, and in their teams.

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With an active staff of six over the period, the HR department continued to deploy professionals throughout the Agency. This was done through the recruitment of returning employees (renewals) and new trainees; the provision of training and workshops to staff in specific areas (See figs. 4 &5); the management of legal matters from the industrial court to internal investigations; the revision of the structure of the Agency as well as the completion job reviews where job descriptions were revised.

Even with some technical limitations, the HR department continued to develop human potential, revise policies and procedures, provide HR advice to staff focusing on developing our leaders and keep employee relations first and foremost.

ITEM	NUMBERS
<i>Staff recruited over the period</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>New employees</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Renewals</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Staff Separated</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Terminated</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Voluntary Non-Renewal</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Deceased</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Non-renewal (End of Contract)</i>	<i>3</i>
<u>Disciplinary /Grievance Matters</u>	<u>Numbers</u>
<i>Terminated</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>1</i>

Fig 4 Staffing figures

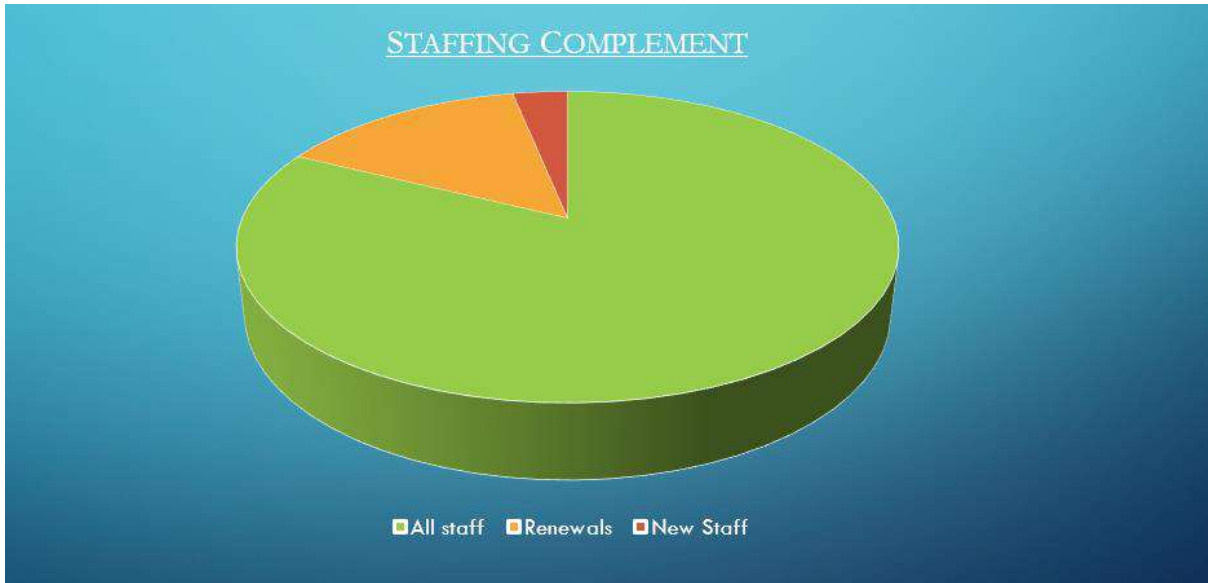


Fig 5 Staffing as a percentage of the whole

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Finance Department is responsible for the management of the Agency's financial resources on behalf of the Director, particularly in relation to the payment of salaries, allowances, goods and services. The Department is also actively involved in the monitoring, control, modernising and implementation of accounting systems. This is carried out in accordance with the laws, regulations, policies and guidelines of the Government through the Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Finance and other Ministries/Departments as required.

The department functions in close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to ensure accountability, integrity and transparency in its transactions. As such, apart from internal policies, the department is guided by the legal and regulatory framework of the Exchequer and Audit act Chapter 69:01, Financial Regulations, Financial Instructions 1965 and Ministry of Finance Circulars. This provides another level of commitment to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, who have given their trust to the Agency for their security.

Over the period, the Accounts Department facilitated the acquisition of various assets, goods and services as required by the Divisions (Cost Centres). To this end the department achieved an expenditure of over 95% of the allocated funds in 2019. Moreover, the management of various votes facilitated the acquisition and on time contractual payments for critical assets, infrastructure and strategic technology in keeping with the Agency's strategic plan.

FINANCIAL REPORT

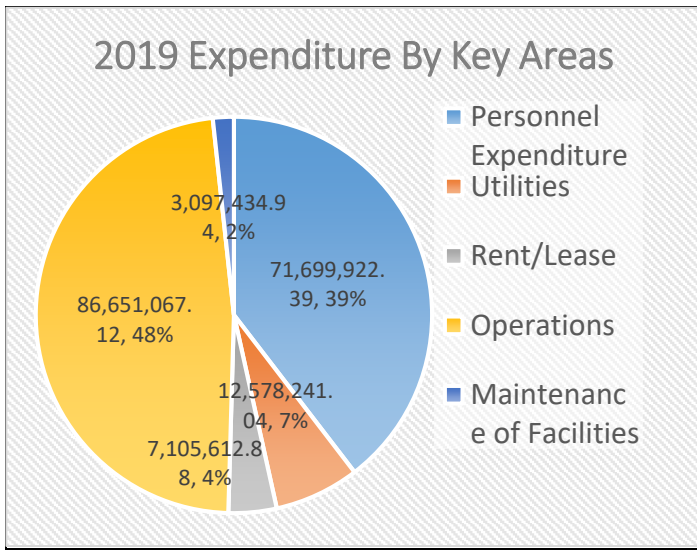
The SSA received a total of **192,976,616.05TTD** during 2019, representing 16.66% increase in income from 2018. Total expenditure in 2019 increased by just over 18% from 2018, primarily due to payments in relation to the operations and maintenance of helicopters and the expansion in technology assets. This is reflected in the expenditure for

Goods and Services, which increased from **98,445,113.43TTD** in 2018 to **129,191,441.92TTD** in 2019,

Personnel expenditure saw a slight increase from **57,073,460.66TTD** in 2018 to **57,575,379.03TTD** in 2019. When considering all payments (salary, allowances and Gratuity) made to all staff, there was an increase of 9.48% from 2018 to 2019. Notwithstanding, expenditure in this regard has somewhat stabilised based on the rationalisation of a revised organisational structure and payments of gratuities in fulfilment of employment contracts. In moving forward there may be a need to seek increases in personnel expenditure to fill critical existing vacancies on approval of the new revised structure. (See FR: Table 1; FR Fig.6)

INCOME	TT\$
Subvention from the Ministry of National Security	147,157,817.78
Wire transfer payments	45,818,798.27
Recovery of Over-payments	29,131.14
TOTAL INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	193,005,747.19
TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD	188,365,307.37
<i>Including:</i>	
Contract Staff –Salaries and Allowances	57,575,379.03
Goods & Services	129,191,441.92
Minor Equipment	587,109.95
Gratuities	1,011,376.47

FR: TABLE 1: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2019



FR Figure 6 Expenditure by Key Areas.

Operational expenditure represented 48% of all major expenditure for 2019, moreover expenditure remitted to the National Helicopter Services Limited for 2019 amounted to 47% of the total cost of operations, a 24% increase from 2018.

Significant Legal Matters impacting on SSA's Business

Our legal department has three primary functions: to advise and guide the Agency on diverse areas of law ranging from criminal law, public law (including constitutional and administrative law) industrial relations, public and private international law, corporate governance and regulatory laws including financial and procurement related matters; to represent the agency in litigation; and to maintain liaisons and consult with specific local and foreign agencies, organisations and government entities.

Over the year 2019, the SSA's legal department has done yeoman's service to both our internal stakeholders and external liaisons. They have added value, underscoring the vision of the Agency - to be a world-class intelligence entity.

In this light, 2019, has seen the unit work diligently with the Attorney General's Office on the Legislative Review Committee providing input on a number of amendments, bills and regulations. Significant contributions were provided in relation to the Interception of Communications Act (including proposed regulations) and the SSA's General and Employee regulations. The legal unit also provided comments and proposed amendments to a number of acts and bills inclusive of the Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Bill, the Bail (Amendment) Bill, the Cybercrime Bill, the Evidence (Amendment) Bill and the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill.

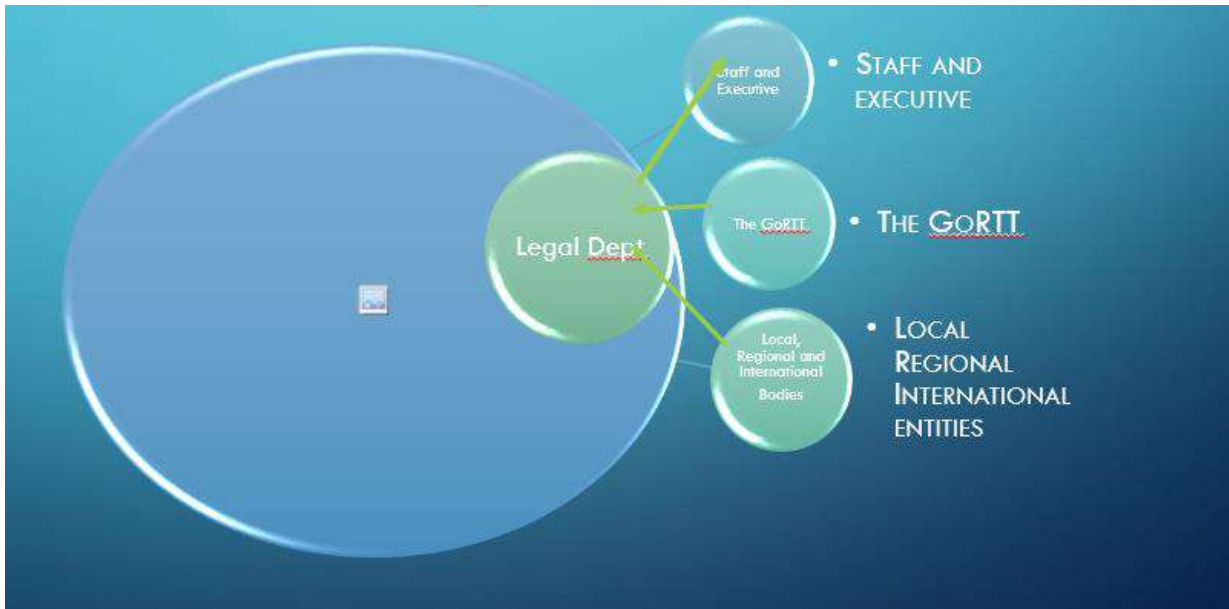
To help foster partnerships and facilitate joint actions with the SSA, the legal unit has also negotiated with other countries, international institutions, sister agencies and local entities to strengthen relations and bolster the SSA's role in this value chain. In keeping with our values, the department has also made a number recommendations re: improved oversight of and regulation of the agency, given that so much is entrusted to the SSA.

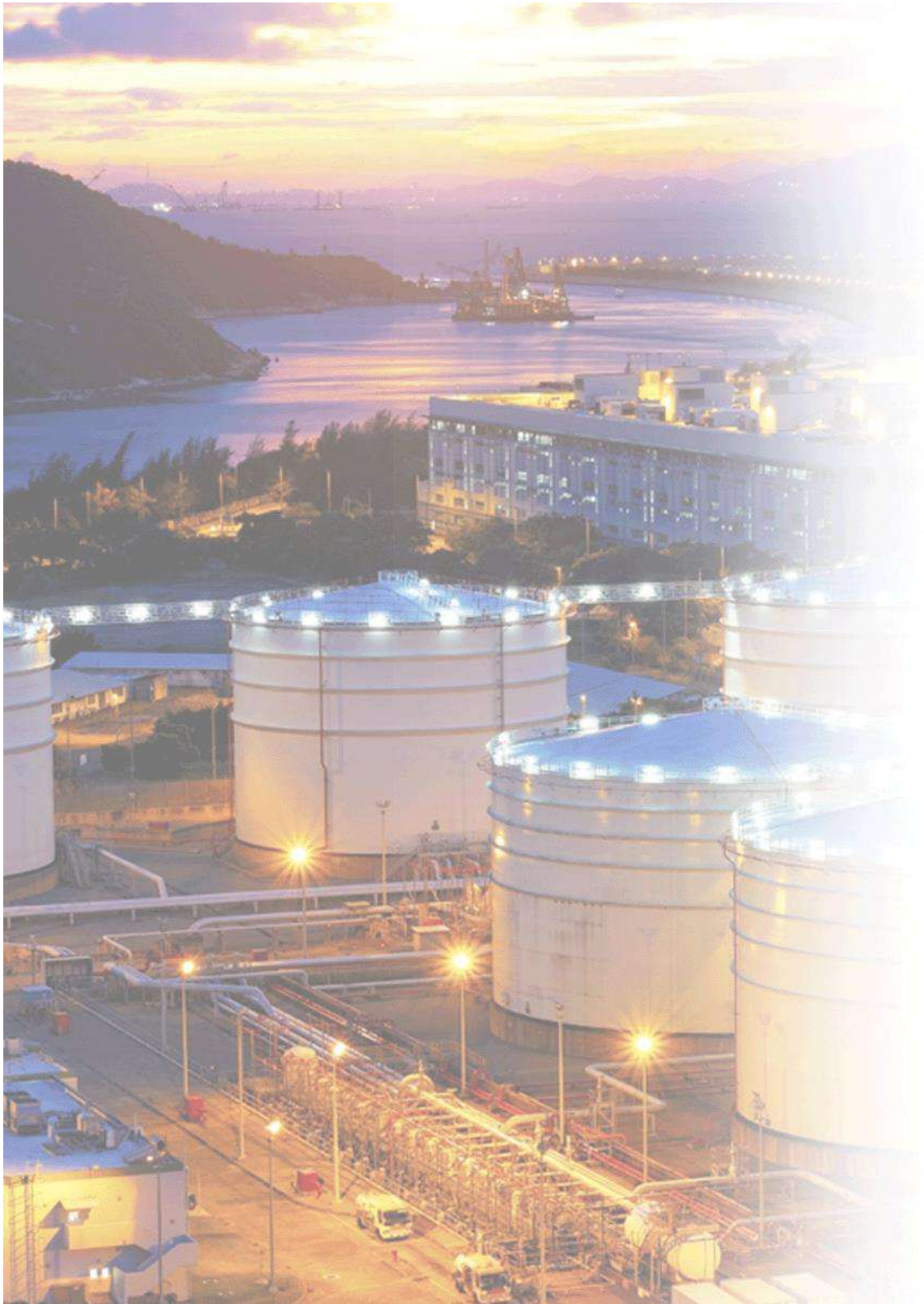
Internally, the legal department continued to provide guidance and advice to the staff and executive of the Agency. They advised on, prepared and reviewed IOCA applications and

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requests; provided guidance and advice on policy and provided support to operations. Finally, the legal unit assiduously and fearlessly represented the Agency in litigation being conducted in the High Court, the Industrial Court and the Court of Appeal.

The Work of the Legal Department





Operational Report

IN SUPPORT OF THE REDUCTION OF CRIME

The operational arm of the SSA, seeking to support the Agency's mission and achieve the objectives of the strategic plan, through the four previously mentioned key result areas, continued to upgrade the skills of staff and improve processes and procedures, indeed, perfect the operationalising of intelligence. This has generated better products and improved decision-making. Generally, systems were upgraded, documentation strategies were developed and data management tools enhanced

The SSA Fusion Centre (SSAFC) contributes to the Information Sharing Environment by receiving, analyzing and disseminating information through coordinated activities with the various agencies, which have the responsibility for law enforcement. The FC provides a mechanism through which law enforcement, public safety officials and private partners can collaborate to improve our ability to safeguard Trinidad and Tobago and prevent / disrupt criminal and terrorist activity. We also furnish the venue and means for communication.

In 2019 significant time was invested in establishing new relationships and reinforcing old ones with our external stakeholders. This has produced more collaborative professional associations and greater operational success. The division also sought to improve methodologies to ensure greater operational achievement in providing situational awareness, and the coordination of operations.

It is understood that the strength of a successful FC, lies in its component elements. This enterprise architecture comprises not only well-trained personnel and robust systems, but a complex grid of expertly supervised data, knowledge, and geo-spatial information. All this, while ensuring, at the forefront of every decision, the rights of our citizens.

2019 saw the SSAFC and air division involved in operations providing information and/or intelligence to the other arms of the National Security apparatus with respect to:

- i. Drug seizures,
- ii. Aerial missions (30), including finding missing persons at sea,
- iii. Marijuana eradication exercises; on occasion with a street value of over TT\$24 million
- iv. Observation of illegal quarrying



The SSAFC also provided support for matters of national urgency, national events, and disasters and to different agencies in operational planning, strategies and interventions to suppress criminal activities. They facilitated communication between the Agency and the public.

Complementing the work of the SSAFC, the SSA provides specialist investigative services to law enforcement bodies locally through the Investigations Department (INVESSA). Investigative support was provided consistently to LEAs and other internal and external, local and international stakeholders.

For 2019, they persisted in strengthening the path from intelligence to evidence, and supported the Agency in data collection. They continue to be the face of the Agency for data collection. In keeping with the Agency's strategic priorities of achieving operating

excellence and building organisational capacity, by investing in our employees, staff were exposed to a variety of training packages and workshops over the period.

Success came in the form of several seizures and arrest of targets, disruptions.

Over the period, in accomplishing the division's goals and the Agency's mission, they also assisted in the disruption of threat-to-life situations; helped recover murder convicts and assisted in hostage recoveries (See OR: Table 2 Invesa Accomplishment)



OR: Table 2 Invesa Accomplishments

The department, focusing on combatting and disrupting serious crime, has improved the speed of dissemination of operational intelligence and evidence, as it relates to investigations. More importantly, the quality of the products has seen significant improvement over this period. In our joint investigations, this of course has led to charges for various offences, as well as the disruption of criminal activities. The Agency's record can be seen at

[Managing Knowledge](#)

In making the SSA Amendment Act 2016, Chap 15.06, Section 6 a reality, 2019, saw the Knowledge Management team expanding its reach, through increased information sharing, training and outreach. Databases were upgraded and requestor satisfaction increased significantly.

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It is the central repository of the all the information products owned by the Agency, also capturing tacit knowledge, identifying and cataloguing the knowledge experts. It is the foundation upon which the history of the Agency, its activities and successes can be drawn.

INTELLIGENCE

This division is core to the Agency’s success. Key to the Detection and Prevention of Serious Crime is the continual improvement of intelligence products and services. Here is housed the critical thinkers, analysts and technical experts, who must pull all the pieces of the puzzle together and create intelligence; develop policy and do continuous research, all supported by proficient technicians. In the last year, as a minimum of eighty-six (86) actionable intelligence reports were shared with our external stakeholders, the equivalent of one every four days approximately, training continued for this group from local and international experts and stakeholders, covering all aspects of the requisite skills-building essential for divisional progress.

This has led to a significant improvement in the quality of research, reports; increased productivity for internal, national and internationally impactful products. It has also led to the SSA being included in bilateral security arrangements with the European Union, Ghana, India and the Republic of Korea. In addition, the SSA has contributed to the development of national level policies related to illegal firearms reduction among other items.

Intelligence provided to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) by the SSA

SUSPECTS ARRESTED	SEIZURE OF MARIJUANA	FIREARMS SEIZED	ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION	FIREARM COMPONENTS	MONEY US\$ TT\$
					
26	43.1Kg	7	234	19	\$8,312.00 \$45,991.00

OR: Fig 7 LE Support

	<u>LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATION SUPPORT</u>	QUANTITIES & NUMBERS
i	THREAT TO LIFE AVERTED	7
ii	POLICE CLOTHING RECOVERED	1
iii	CAMOUFLAGE CLOTHING RECOVERED	5
iv	BULLET PROOF VESTS RECOVERED	4
x	ESCAPED PRISONERS RECOVERED	5

OR: Table 3 LE support

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

As per the SSA Amendment Act 2016, Chap. 15:06, we see the oversight of the SSA's work as extremely important to maintenance of a democratic society. Where we have been entrusted with taxpayers resources, we must set the best example. We who have taken the oath of office are expected not to violate the trust of the nation. Hence our support for external scrutiny.

Sections 10 and 13 speak to properly accounting for the funds of the Agency, with the requisite Auditor General's inspections and, the completion and submission of an annual report on the activities of the Agency to Parliament, respectively. This 2019 Annual report is complete.

Another important leg in the SSA's pyramid of supervision is the *in camera* Joint Select Committee requirements. At this Joint Select Committee, pertinent questions about the administration and policy advice of the Agency can be asked of representatives. 2019 saw our legal department attend, with respect to the Sexual Offences Act and in November, the SSA went before the Joint Select Committee, for a follow-up discussion on firearms in Trinidad and Tobago. We are prepared to do more in 2020.

THE SSA'S OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

I, do swear and declare that I will honestly and faithfully serve and fulfil the duties that devolve upon me by reason of my employment in the Strategic Services Agency, and that I will not divulge any information being facts or expressions of opinions based on such facts gained by me as a result of my employment to any unauthorised person, orally or in writing, without the previous sanction of the Director. I understand that these provisions apply not only during the period of my employment but also after my employment with the Agency has ceased.

2020 STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

In 2020, the SSA will continue to discharge its functions in line with its statutory mandate and guided by the Strategic Plan. The Agency will continue to identify opportunities for increased collaboration and cooperation to suppress serious crime. Work with partners to improve mechanisms for the capture and analysis of information to enhance our understanding of emerging threats and build the capacity to address these threats.

The SSA will take advantage of technological solutions improve systems to manage data, conduct risk/vulnerability assessments and develop viable counter-terrorism / crime plans and strategies. The primary objectives for 2020 will be developed to deliver on the following:

Detection and Prevention of Serious Crime

- Continually improve intelligence products and services
- Continually improve training products and services
- Advance research on serious crime
- Enhance information sharing networks
- Strengthen Public Education and Outreach

Achieve Operational Excellence

- Strengthen current, and attract new, Alliances and Partnerships
- Optimise the Agency's technology infrastructure and facilities
- Continually develop and upgrade work processes and practices

Build Organisational Capacity

- Grow our People
- Complete the Organizational Transformation
- Fortify the desired culture of fraternity and performance

Continuing the Creation of Social and Economic Value

- Establishing a return on investment in the delivery of national Intelligence products and services.

There is much work to be done. We shall strive to achieve our mission of “ensuring the security of the nation and the people of Trinidad and Tobago by creating and delivering the highest quality intelligence, operational support and training products and services to our local and international partners to detect, pre-empt, disrupt and dismantle current and emerging threats”.

SSA’s Authority

According to The Strategic Services Agency Act, Chapter 15:06 3. (1) The Strategic Services Agency was established, and consists of the Director and employees of the Agency.

Maj. Roger Best was appointed and given a three-year contract as Director of the Agency in July 2019. He is responsible for the operational, investigative and administrative control of the Agency; and is the principle advisor to the Minister on matters related to the Act.

-End-